

## **MONTANA COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY SERVICE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Montana Honors AmeriCorps Members During AmeriCorps Week**

(Helena) --- The Governor's Office on Community Service today announced Montana will honor AmeriCorps Montana by welcoming the 500,000<sup>th</sup> member during the first nation-wide AmeriCorps Week of May 13 -20.

"Montana's strength is its people," said Sen. Jon Tester. "And thanks to programs like AmeriCorps, our state is stronger than ever. My thanks goes to folks who embrace public service, hard work, and helping our neighbors in need --- these are true Montana values."

AmeriCorps Montana is proud to celebrate many achievements since its inception in 1994. In total Montana has hosted more than 9,000 AmeriCorps members of all ages and backgrounds to meet local needs, strengthen communities and increase civic engagement through 88 national service projects across Montana.

"I've always believed that service is the most noble of any human endeavor," said Montana's senior U.S. Senator Max Baucus. "Whether it's service to community, to state, to church or country - we as Montanans value service. That's what AmeriCorps represents. I take my hat off to all the men and women involved in AmeriCorps."

In addition to individual service, AmeriCorps members multiply their efforts by recruiting numerous community residents to volunteer. In 2006, the nation's 75,000 AmeriCorps members recruited 1.2 million volunteers.

"Working with AmeriCorps is not just learning about the needs of our communities. These few dedicated individuals are the catalysts that drive everyone to volunteer and positively change our communities," said Miss Montana Christie Hageman, who works with AmeriCorps on various community service initiatives.

AmeriCorps members typically remain engaged in their communities once their service is complete, by running nonprofits and marshalling resources within their communities to address difficult issues.

"The AmeriCorps program provides an invaluable service to Montana communities," said Congressman Denny Rehberg. "This program, in cooperation with local organizations, works to address some of our state's most critical needs. AmeriCorps Week is a great way to show our appreciation for the work they are doing."

AmeriCorps Montana features several programs: The Corporation for National Community Service supports AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps, hosting programs like Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Foster Grandparents. Within the VISTA paradigm, members serve at the pleasure of Communities in Action, Montana Campus Compact, Montana Legal Service, or the Prevention Resource Center.

The Governor's Commission on Community Service supports all AmeriCorps State Programs, which include Community Partners, the Jobs for Montana Graduates Foundation, Literacy Corps, Montana Campus Corps, Montana Conservation Corps, and Technology Corps. The Office of Public Instruction houses Learn and Serve.

Upon completion of an individual's term of service, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive Education Awards, which can be used to pay back student loans or cover future tuition costs. VISTA volunteers, for example, receive the Segal Educational Award in the amount of \$4,725. Since 1994, more than 2,200 Montana residents have qualified for AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than \$7,100,000.

AmeriCorps members continue to accomplish their core goals of engaging more Americans in service, strengthening communities, and improving their own lives each day by doing lots of little things for people with big results.

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